

FACT SHEET



St. Louis Ozone Nonattainment Area

March 1999

Current Action

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing in a Federal Register notice that under a new policy, Missouri and Illinois may be able to qualify for an extension of the date by which the St. Louis nonattainment area must attain the one-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ozone. EPA has proposed to find that the St. Louis area, currently classified as a moderate ozone nonattainment area, did not attain the one-hour ozone standard by November 15, 1996, the Clean Air Act (CAA) attainment date for moderate nonattainment areas; however, EPA's new policy recognizes that certain areas have had difficulty meeting the ozone standard because portions of the air pollution affecting them originate in other "upwind" areas. In other words, pollution is transported into these areas by the winds. The new policy establishes criteria under which states with affected areas are eligible for extensions to the attainment dates set forth in the CAA. If Missouri and Illinois meet the criteria set forth in the policy, the St. Louis area's attainment date will be extended. If the states do not meet the criteria, EPA is proposing to reclassify the area from moderate to serious nonattainment.

Ozone Transport Problem

Several areas of the country including the St. Louis area, are affected by pollutants that travel downwind from other areas. This transport of pollutants, referred to as the "ozone transport problem," interferes with cities' ability to meet the one-hour ozone standard.

Recognizing the air pollutant transport problem, EPA worked in partnership with 37 eastern states, industry, academia, and environmental groups to recommend strategies to reduce the transport of ozone and ozone-forming pollutants across state boundaries. After two years of study, this partnership, known as the Ozone Transport Assessment Group (OTAG), made its recommendations.

EPA acted on OTAG's work and issued a final rule on October 27, 1998, requiring 22 states and the District of Columbia to submit state implementation plans or SIPs, to decrease transport of ozone by reducing nitrogen oxide emissions, a precursor to ozone formation called NOx.

Extension of Air Quality Attainment Dates

EPA issued its transport policy, "Guidance on Extension of Air Quality Attainment Dates for Downwind Transport Areas" on July 16, 1998. The transport policy outlines how an attainment date may be extended for an area, provided certain criteria are met. The four criteria are:

- An area must be identified as a downwind area affected by transport from either an upwind area in the same state with a later attainment date or an upwind area in another state that contributes significantly to downwind nonattainment.
- An approvable attainment demonstration must be submitted showing the area will attain the one-hour standard by a specified attainment date.
- The area must adopt all local measures

required under the current classification (including reasonably available control technology (RACT) for major sources emitting volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides) and any additional measures necessary to demonstrate attainment after accounting for reductions that will occur in upwind areas.

- The area must implement all adopted measures as quickly as practicable (no later than the date upwind reductions for attainment are achieved).

In October 1998, EPA notified the Governors of Missouri and Illinois that the transport policy was available and requested that the Governors respond with commitment letters to meet the requirements by November 15, 1999. Those letters of commitment have been received by EPA.

EPA expects that when it acts to approve the attainment demonstration, it will extend the area's attainment date consistent with the schedule for achieving needed upwind reductions. The area would then no longer be subject to reclassification or "bump-up" for failure to attain by its original attainment date. EPA will issue an additional notice and take public comment prior to acting on the attainment demonstration and request for attainment date extension.

This approach ensures that local control measures required by the CAA are achieved. It considers transport of pollutants into the St. Louis area that impair the ability of the area to meet air standards, and it harmonizes the St. Louis area's attainment date with the schedule for upwind emissions reductions associated with the NO_x SIP call.

Next Steps

In the Federal Register notice, EPA is announcing an opportunity for the St. Louis area to qualify for an extension of the attainment date. EPA believes that the St. Louis area is affected by upwind transport of pollutants, thus the area meets the first of the four criteria outlined in the transport policy. Before the area can be eligible for an attainment

date extension, it must meet the remaining three criteria as well.

If by November 15, 1999, Missouri or Illinois fail to make the appropriate demonstration under the transport policy requirements, EPA expects to finalize the finding of failure to attain the one-hour ozone standard and the St. Louis area will be reclassified to serious nonattainment. A reclassification to serious would impose more stringent requirements on the local area.

For More Information

Copies of relevant documents supporting this proposal, including air quality data; guidance on the extension of attainment dates in downwind transport areas; and state submittals are available at the following addresses:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Air Planning and Development Branch,
726 Minnesota Avenue,
Kansas City, KS 66101

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Air Programs Branch, Air and Radiation Division
77 West Jackson Boulevard,
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center
Air Docket (6102)
401 M Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Telephone contacts for this proposed rule are:

Royan Teter, EPA Region 7, Kansas City, KS, at (913) 551-7609 or Jay Bortzer, EPA Region 5, Chicago, IL, at (312) 886-1430.